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PAGE 01 CARACA 12431 271124Z
ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	AID-01	A-01	CA-02	CCO-00	CIAE-00
	CTME-00	C-01	DODE-00	DS-00	FBO-01	HA-09	H-01
	IMMC-01	INRE-00	INR-01	L-03	ADS-00	M-01	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OCS-06	OMB-01	OPR-01	PA-01	PM-02	PRS-01
	P-01	SCT-03	SNP-00	SP-00	SR-00	SSC-01	SS-00
	TRSE-00	T-01	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	RPE-00	/059W
-----7F4F42 271125Z /38							

O 271126Z NOV 92 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5738
INFO ARA COLLECTIVE
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

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E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: MARR, PGOV, ASEC, PREL, VE
SUBJECT: SITREP NO. 1/ ATTEMPTED COUP IN CARACAS

1. SHORTLY BEFORE 5 A.M., NOVEMBER 27, A GROUP OF MILITARY SEIZED CONTROL OF CHANNEL 8 TELEVISION IN THE LOS RUICES AREA OF EASTERN CARACAS. GUNFIRE AND SEVERAL LARGER EXPLOSIONS WERE CLEARLY AUDIBLE IN NEARBY RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

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PAGE 02 CARACA 12431 271124Z
2. EMBASSY OFFICERS NOTIFIED THE MARINE GUARD, WHO DISPATCHED LOCAL GUARDS TO EASTERN CARACAS, WHERE THEY LEARNED FROM POLICE THAT MILITARY HAS SEIZED THE TELEVISION STATION. AT THAT MOMENT, MILITARY HAD NOT YET MADE ANY USE OF THE STATION, BUT A FEW MINUTES LATER THEY BEGAN APPEARING ON THE AIR WITH A TAPE OF LT. COL. CHAVEZ. CHAVEZ CLAIMED THAT THE MBR 200 (BOLIVARIAN) MOVEMENT WAS CARRYING OUT ITS HISTORIC DUTY TO THE COUNTRY BY RETURNING TO ARMED STRUGGLE. THE TAPE APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN PREPARED WELL IN ADVANCE, APPARENTLY WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF CHAVEZ' GUARDS. A FEW MINUTES LATER, TWO

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JUNIOR MILITARY AND TWO CIVILIANS BEGAN APPEARING LIVE ON CHANNEL 8 TV. THEY CLAIMED TO BE IN CONTROL OF CARACAS AND ASKED THE PEOPLE AND MILITARY TO JOIN THEM. CLEARLY, THEY ARE NOT IN ACTUAL CONTROL OF CARACAS; STREETS ARE GENERALLY CALM, AND MANY PEOPLE ARE GOING TO WORK AS USUAL. THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGN AS YET OF ANY POPULAR REACTION IN FAVOR OF THE COUP ATTEMPT.

3. EAC AND MANY OTHER AMERICAN STAFF RAPIDLY GATHERED AT THE EMBASSY AND TOOK INITIAL STEPS. (AMERICAN SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY CLOSED BECAUSE OF THE THANKSGIVING WEEKEND. CONSULAR VISA OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN CLOSED.) POLCOUNS SPOKE TO POLITICAL INSIDER CARMELO LAURIA, WHO HAD JUST SPOKEN TO PRESIDENT PEREZ; LAURIA REPORTED THAT PEREZ WAS CALM AND THE SITUATION APPEARED TO BE RETURNING TO CONTROL, BUT THAT THERE WERE UNSPECIFIED PROBLEMS AT BASE LIBERTADOR (AIRBASE ONE HOUR WEST OF CARACAS) AND THE SMALL LA CARLOTA AIRFIELD IN CENTRAL CARACAS. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, PEREZ HIMSELF APPEARED BRIEFLY ON CNN TELEVISION TO REASSURE INTERNATIONAL OPINION.

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PAGE 03 CARACA 12431 271124Z

4. AT ABOUT 0630, AIRCRAFT OVERFLEW EASTERN CARACAS. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, EMBASSY SOURCES REPORTED THAT DISIP (SECURITY POLICE) HEADQUARTERS HAD BEEN BOMBED.

5. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES AS OF 0700, PRESIDENT PEREZ IS IN MIRAFLORES PALACE WITH THE HIGH COMMAND AND IN COMMAND. A BATTALION AT FUERTE TIUNA IN WESTERN CARACAS REPORTEDLY TRIED TO RISE EARLIER THIS MORNING, BUT WAS REPRESSED. THERE IS OCCASIONAL GUNFIRE AT DISIP AND POLICE LOCATIONS AROUND TOWN, ACCORDING TO TADIO NEWS (OCCASIONALLY AUDIBLE FROM EMBASSY). THE CHAVEZ TAPE IS BEING SIMULCAST ON TELEVISION CHANNELS 8, 2 AND 4. MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SPOKESMEN ON THE TELEVISION ARE STILL CALLING FOR POPULAR SUPPORT, AND CLAIM THAT THEIR ATTEMPT IS NATIONAL. NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS INCLUDING EDUARDO FERNANDEZ AND RAFAEL CALDERA HAVE BEGUN TO ISSUE STATEMENTS CONDEMNING THE COUP ATTEMPT.

FELDER

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